

EXISTING NOISE ELEMENT POLICY 4b

POLICY 4b

Because exterior community noise equivalent levels (CNEL) above 55 to 60 decibels and/or interior CNEL levels above 45 decibels may have an adverse effect on public health and welfare, it is the policy of the County of San Diego that:

1. Whenever possible, development in San Diego County should be planned and constructed so that noise sensitive areas are not subject to noise in excess of CNEL equal to 55 decibels.
2. Whenever it appears that new development will result in any (existing or future) noise sensitive area being subject to noise levels of CNEL equal to 60 decibels or greater, an acoustical study should be required.
3. If the acoustical study shows that noise levels at any noise sensitive area will exceed CNEL equal to 60 decibels, the development should not be approved unless the following findings are made:
 - A. Modification to the development have been or will be made which reduce the exterior noise level below CNEL equal to 60 decibels; or
 - B. If with current noise abatement technology it is infeasible to reduce exterior CNEL to 60 decibels, then modifications to the development have been or will be made which reduce interior noise below CNEL equal to 45 decibels. Particular attention shall be given to noise sensitive interior spaces such as bedrooms. And,
 - C. If finding “B” above is made, a further finding is made that there are specifically identified overriding social or economic considerations which warrant approval of the development without modification as described in “A” above.
4. If the acoustical study shows that noise levels at any noise sensitive area will exceed CNEL to 75 decibels, the development should not be approved.

“Noise Sensitive Area” means the building site of any residence, hospital, school, library, or similar facility where quiet is an important attribute of the environment.

Definitions (applicable to paragraph 1 through 4 of Policy 4b)

“Development” means any physical development including but not limited to residences, commercial, or industrial facilities, roads, civic buildings, hospitals, schools, airports, or similar facilities.

Exemption

1. For the rooms in “Noise Sensitive Areas”, which are usually occupied only a part of the day (schools, libraries, or similar), the interior one-hour average sound level, due to noise outside, should not exceed 50 decibels.
2. For County road construction projects, the exterior noise level due to vehicular traffic impacting a noise sensitive area should not exceed the following values:
 - A. Federally funding projects shall comply with applicable Federal Highway Administration Standards.
 - B. Other projects – CNEL = 60 dBA, except if the existing or projected noise level without the project is 58 dBA or greater a 3 dBA increase will be allowed, up to the maximum permitted by Federal Highway Administration Standards.

Action Program 4b1. Recommend programs to soundproof buildings or redevelop areas where it is impossible to reduce existing source noise to acceptable levels.

Action Program 4b2. Study the feasibility of extending the application of Section 1092, California Administrative Code dealing with noise insulation standards to single-family dwellings, and incorporating higher standards for reduction of exterior noise intrusion into structures.

Action Program 4b3. Require present and projected noise level data to be included in Environmental Impact Reports. Designs to mitigate adverse noise impacts shall also be used.